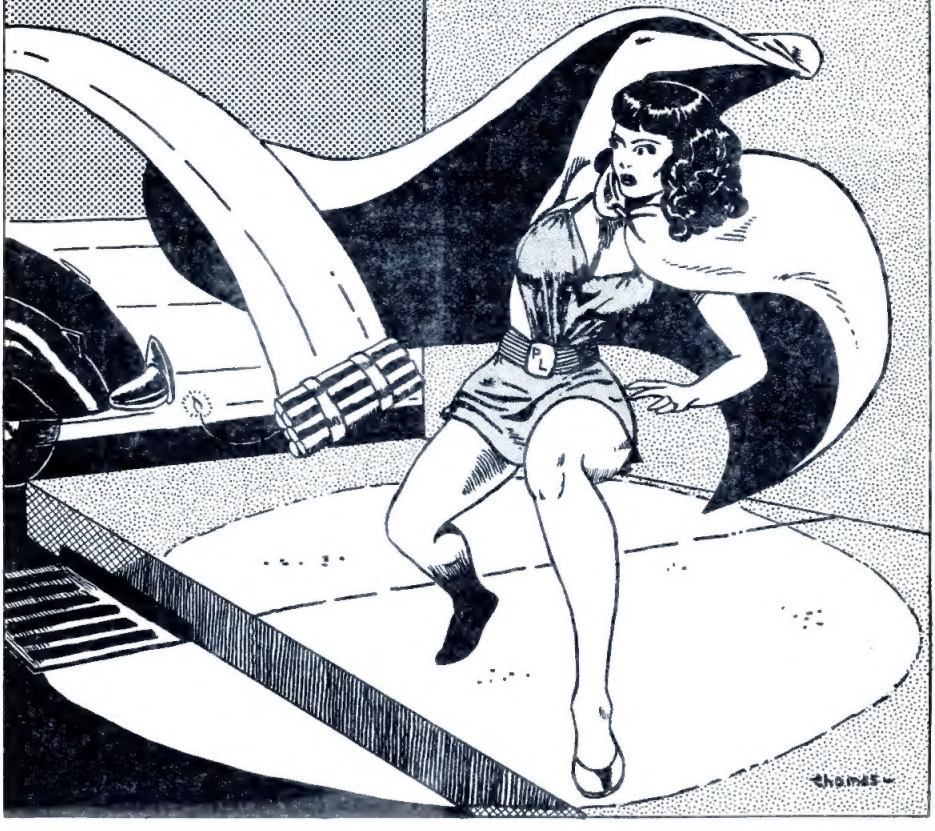
the COMIC WORLD



COMING NEXT ISSUE---

COMIC WORLD #11 will carry a lead article on the old Daredevil, the only complete, in-depth examination ever attempted of Lev Gleason's famous costumed hero. A total analysis, with illustrations taken from the original comics.

Plus, White Indian, a close look at one of ME's western features, and one of Frank Frazetta's best drawn strips.

Along with Information Center, a long, well developed feature devoted to answering any and all questions concerning any phase of comicdom.

COMIC WORLD #11, out Dec 15. Get your order in early. Better yet, subscribe! Why chance missing an issue?

Vol 1 number 10
THE COMIC WORLD

is a comics slanted fanzine produced monthly by Robert Jennings, 3819 Chambers Drive, Nashville, Tenn. (37211). Single copies cost 50¢ each, subscriptions sell at 6 issues for $3.00 or 12 issues for $6.00. No more than $6.00 can be accepted. advertising sells for $10.oo for a full page, $5.50 for half a page and $3.oo for a quarter page. All ads must be either camera ready on a one to one relationship, or avaliable for retyping by the editor to fit into layout requirments.

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THE COVER

for this issue shows Phantom Lady in serious trouble, as underworld enemies seek to end her crime fighting career.

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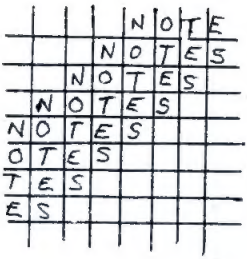


by
Robert Jennings

WELCOME TO THE TENTH ISSUE of COMIC WORLD. We hope you will enjoy it. We are adding a letter column this issue, a rather weak one, but we would like to know what you think of it anyway, and whether or not it should be continued. For various reasons fans these days don't seem to write letters of comment like they did a few years ago. Only by sending in good solid letters of comment on these issues can an intelligent letter column be maintained. Likewise good LOC items are useful in determining future editorial policy, so please do let us know what you think of the product you're buying.

AND SPEAKING OF WHICH we would like to invite your subscriptions once again. The subs are coming in slowly and steadily, but a little too slowly to give us the Big Picture in easy order. We must have a large subscription base if this magazine can hope to survive. The rates are six issues for $3.00 or twelve issues for $6.00. You will note there is no discount rate on subscriptions mainly because the expenses involved in getting this publication out are unbelievably high, and we barely hold our head above water at 50¢ a throw. To cut the sub rate would only cause us to lose ground even more rapidly than we are now.

As always, your subscription money is guaranteed safe. In the event that this magazine should cease publication, all unused subscription money will be refunded.

Also, please make use of our advertising section. We are reaching an audience of series comic collectors, not a range of fringe fans and dabblers in the hobby. If you are selling or buying you have the best market possible right here in this readership. The ad rates are $10.00 for a full page, $5.50 for a half page, and $3.00 for a quarter page or fraction thereof. Material must be submitted camera ready on 8½x11 or section thereof, or suitable for retyping.

Finally, for those who care, we still have some back issues up for grabs. Copies of issue #5 containing Glen Johnson's award winning Skyman article are avaliable at 50¢ each. A couple or three incomplete copies of #3 and may be had for 40¢ each, and of course we still have copies of #9 at 50¢ each and some copies of #8 our double sized revival issue at $1.00 each.

While looking over the pile of material in my room here I stumbled across a rather large and cumbersome stack of COMIC ADVERTISING REVIEW. Perhaps some of

you senile old timers will recall CAR. This was an advertising and mini-feature type publication issued several years before today. Anyway, it happens that I have a four foot stack of these things left over. I have copies of issues 4 thru 9 in some abundence, and I would really like to clear this stuff out. Mere words wouldn't express how glad I would be if they were to leave my possession. So for those who care enough to give the very best, I'm going to make this super duper one month only special deal of a life time for old friends and newbuddies only. 10¢ a whack on these back issues, your choice of issues. A mere dime brings you thrills and chills you never imagined. Such glorious items as a complete two or three page editorial with each issue. Each and every issue carries Hell's Notebooks my bitter sweet fire breathing fanzine review column. Articles and notes and snide remarks in every issue by the greats the near greats and the absolute failures of co-fandom past and gone. Plus dozens and dozens of old outdated comic ads. You'll cry, you'll scream, you'll rave and beat your head against the wall when you see how cheap those juicy old back issues were going for a mere three years ago. All this, a complete tramatic experience wrapped up in two staples on white paper, for ten cents an issue. But you are advised to rush. I've only got a four foot stack of these things. They may go fast. Yes sire, and Chang may invade the Chinese mainland tomorrow too...you never can tell...

A SIMPLE SOLUTION? THE ABSOLUTE ARBITRATION. GROW UP, OR DIE. a possible method to halt the decline and fall of the comic book industry

It is no longer a question of whether comics are dying, merely how much longer they can possibly endure. Comic books, like the dime novel, the pulp magazine and the serial movie, are one their way out. In many respects comics are already dead, only a few basic motor reflexes remain.

It seems odd, when you give it some thought. Comic books, more than any of the other popular entertainment forms, should have the best chance of survival. They cost little, you don't have to be very literate to read them, and the colored combination of dialog and art has a sort of universal appeal.

Yet comic books are in a sharp slump. The reason for their failure lies not in any failure of the comic book form itself, just as the fall of the pulp magazine did not come about because of any problem with the pulp medium. The problem with comic books is simply that the people who own and operate comic book companies do not understand the economics of marketing their product in a changing world.

In a single word, the problem is distribution. Wherever comics are displayed, they outsell every other periodical avaliable. Yet each month there are fewer and fewer retail outlets for comic books. We are faced with the weird situation of a literary form selling better today than it ever has before, yet dying because the retail merchant does not want to carry it.

The reason behind this sudden decline in retail outlets lies with the whole picture of magazine distribution. The profits for a comic book are cut into four sections. For the drug store or food market with a magazine rack, there is a straight twenty percent profit to be made from any periodical carried. They only get twenty percent because magazines and comics come pre-priced, and the local rack jobber who supplies him with magazines only gives him a wholesale price twenty percent below this pre-price. So, for every 15¢ comic that comes thru the register, the retailer makes a twenty percent profit, or 3¢. For every copy of Esquire coming thru, costing $1.25 he also gets twenty percent, 25¢. It takes nine comic books to deliver the same direct profit as he gets from one copy of Esquire. It takes four comic books to excell the profit he gets from sales of the popular 50¢ magazines, 10¢ on Ladies Home Journel, Popular Mechanics and the like. Furthermore these high profit

magazines can all be displayed on one eight foot rack.

For the sake of neatness, if nothing else, comics must be displayed on a stand-up rack. They are difficult to check in, and the problems of pilferage or accident shrinkage is higher with comic books than with other magazines. The only thing which saves comics from extinction is the fact that comic books produce volume sales very quickly. Yet for too many retailers, it is easier to give limited display space to more expensive magazines than to put in or maintain a comic rack which pays only 3¢ per book and which must be restocked and changed every week.

And for a good many retailers, a straight twenty percent profit is simply not enough. In the department story where I work, the company demands a thirty percent profit margin from anything in our book department. Because the local magazine distributor could only give us a twenty percent, we had all magazines taken out. Much the same situation is occurring across the country with every kind of retail outlet.

This last factor is particularly important. In the forties and the days of the Korean War, when people didn't have TV and read a lot more than they do now, a twenty percent profit on massive volumn was considered good money. Today it isn't considered good money. Why carry magazines when you can buy paperback books thru a drop ship distributor who gives you guaranteed sales and a thirty-six percent profit margin? If you are brave and can do without the guaranteed sales, you can order paperbacks direct from the publishers and receive a forty-five percent profit.

This problem doesn't affect comics alone, it affects every kind of magazine. It is further complicated when you look beyond the local rack-jobber. He gives his retail customers a twenty percent profit, but he himself only makes a twenty percent mark-up on the products he sells. And he has to contend with pick up and credit checks, he must maintain a delivery staff, plus counter and rack men, and also must manage reships on outdated merchandise. This doesn't even include the storage facilities he must maintain.

The local distributor may be the man killing comics in many areas. The unfortunate fact remains that between two box-car loads of magazines, he may sell one entire carload of comics, and only sell half a load of girlie magazines, yet he will have made more profit from that half load of girlie books, with less labor expenses and paperwork problems, than he did from the full load of comics.

The situation doesn't stop here either. The national or regional distributor gets a twenty percent mark up also. From his mark up he must pay loading and transportation costs to get those bundles to each local rack-jobber. His actual profit margin after expenses is probably about ten to twelve percent.

So, for a 15¢ comic book, twenty percent goes to the retailer, twenty percent to the rack-jobber, and twenty percent to the national distributor, leaving only forty percent of total sell, 6¢ for the publisher. From his 6¢ the publisher must pay for color printing and binding costs, which are considerable, and also his art and editorial staff.

The problem is quite simply that comics must travel too many hands to reach the ultimate retailer, The simple solution to the problem is to eliminate one or more of the middle men. Retailers are willing to carry comics, because they provide sales volumn. For several years DC got into the drop ship end of distribution, and was handling a large number of comic books, their own, the Marvel comics, and many others besides. Adequate direct distribution to local rack jobbers insured a steady source of material and a steady profit. Comic sales boomed, and the number of titles issued during this period almost doubled.

Unfortunately National Periodicals is no longer a simple publishing company. They are a conglomerate corperation with overlapping interests in many other fields which have very little to do with publishing or printing, and the federal government saw fit to threaten an anti-trust injunction unless DC dissolved its distribution

system. The loss of this primary distribution system has been the most significant factor in the declining sales of current comics and has brought about the end of the so-called silver age of heroic comics.

The solution to the problem is still the same. Either eliminate one or more of the middle men, or demand adequate primary distribution from the source you are using. In order to meet this solution, a new method of distribution needs to be found, and new retail outlets will have to be developed.

There are several distribution companies which could be of great assistence on this problem. I am personally familiar with one in particular. Because of the need for new retail outlets, and because local rack jobbers only pay twenty percent profit, it might be well is comics expanded into new areas.

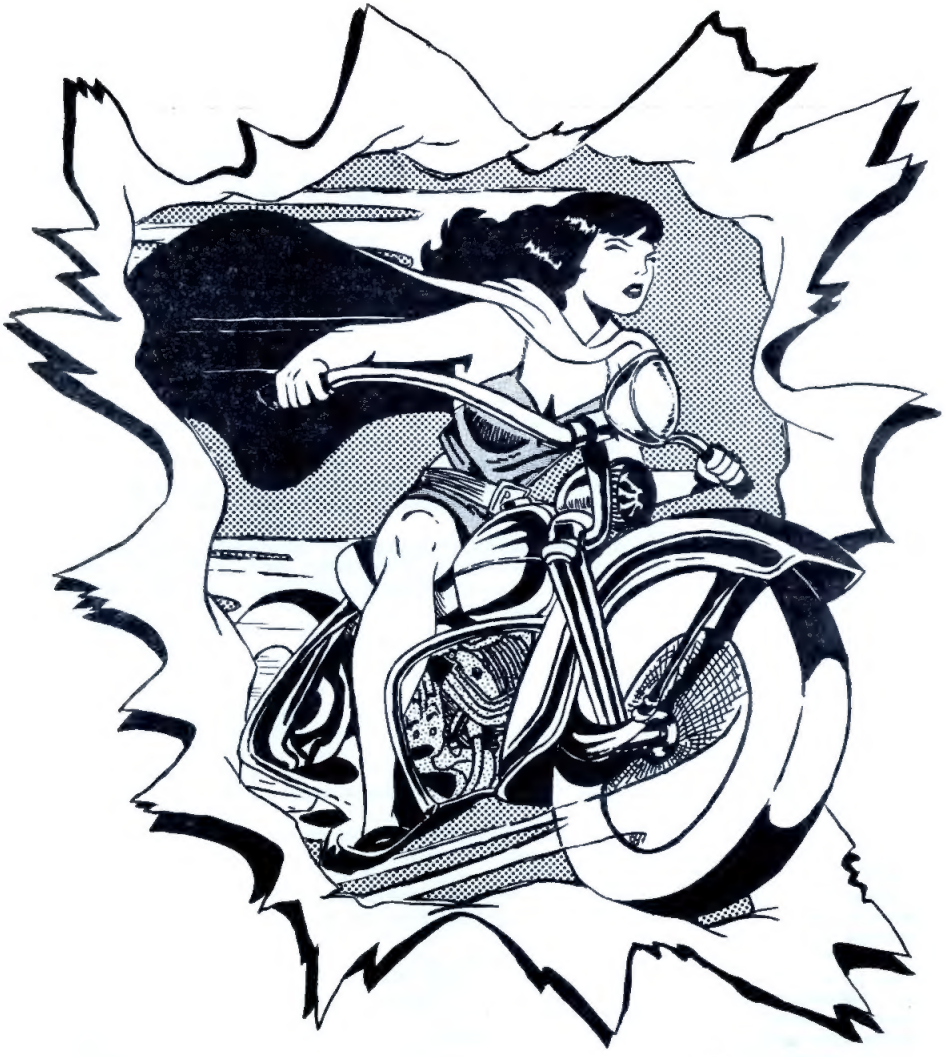
The Cosmo Book Distributing system of New Jersey is a primary source supply for books and paperbacks for thousands of department stores and food market chains across the nation. Cosmo pays a minimum on paperback books of thirty-six percent profit. On hardbacks it is less, about thirty one, and on such magazines as it carries, they pay the retailer between a thirty three and a thirty six percent profit, depending on how they see it. Among other chains, Cosmo services the entire F.W. Woolworth chain, the Woolco chain, the Zayre organization, the K Mart group, the Allied Stores, the Big K Chain and hundreds of smaller chains and individual stores.

New markets are needed. The days when comics could make a go of it on drug store racks and at food markets may well be past. For one thing the days of the small drug store and the corner market are past. Today we have whole shopping centers and gigantic one roof stores where you can buy everything from the week's groceries to a brand new car simply by walking from one end of the building to the other. Unless magazines in general and comics in particular can break into this expanding new market, they will die.

It is up to the comic book publishers to explore the possibilities of this new outlet. They can direct ship their comics to customers which company salesmen call on, much as Western Publishing company handles its business. Western publishing calls on hundreds of thousands of department, chain, discount, five and dime, drug and food stores. Their products can be found from the largest department store down to the smallest ma and pa country market free standing in the middle of nowhere. They handle direct shipment of all their products and sell millions of copies of books and magazines every week.

Comic book publishers do not need to try for such a complete saturation. If they merely made direct connections to large chain markets and department stores they would open a completely untouched market worth millions of dollars per year. It would cost very little to establish a regional sales force, and by direct drop shipping to each individual store the eliminate three middle men with one blow. Instead of a forty percent profit, the comic publishers could pull a fifty-five percent, or maybe even sixty, and give to the retail merchant, a fair profit of forty percent. For forty percent almost any merchant will be willing to carry comic books. Furthermore no injunction or anti-trust suit can be filed because the company is giving direct service to its own customers which it has recruited itself just as every other manufacturing company in the world, except magazine publishers, are now doing.

If this solution is too bold, too sweeping, for comic publishers to swallow, then make use of the distributors which already exist. Cosmo Book company is hungry for new accounts. They give good service to retailer and publisher alike, and they keep the market current. They also have competitors for the middle regions who would also be happy for new business. Whatever the solution, it must come soon. It must come now. To wait any longer means that there will soon be no more comic books. I only wonder if even impending bankruptcy can force today's companies to eliminate antiquated business practices and step into the world of 1969.



by
Robert Jennings

A ghost of a figure appeared on the eve of the building. The gunman whirled, too late! In a blurr of motion, a lithle figure flashed down on top of him. A swift left jab, and a bone jarring right cross and it was all over. And if you had been reading comics back about 1947 or 48, you knew right away that the Phantom Lady was back in action again, and you had been lucky enough to witness the exploits of the most beautiful and efficient female crime fighter ever to appear in comics.

But Phantom Lady's story began well before 1947. Her origins streached all the way back to 1938, and a man named Victor Fox. Her actual development began in 1946.

A funny thing happened in 1946. Victor Fox came back from the war. It was kind of funny because he had left his faultering comic book empire under the care and handling of susposed friends over in Holyoke Mass., and while he was gone they had folded his most popular titles, discarded his favorite heroes, and milked his remaining character, Blue Beetle, like a sponge, loading it up with poor art and stupid stories, generating a pile of quick money for their company and a bad reputation for a hero who had pioneered in costumed popularity.

Mr. Fox was probably not too pleased. There are no records to let us know. What we do know is that Mr. Fox disposed of the Holyoke crowd, and they disappeared never to return to the face of comicdom again. Then he took his remaining characters, and what was left of his fortune, and started over again. He took a long look around, and decided he needed comics with new ideas and new concepts. Comics which, above all, would sell.

Victor Fox was one of the first major comic producers in the business. His first book, WONDER COMICS, appeared in May 1939, and for years his titles enjoyed an odd sort of combination success. Some titles and characters, such as the Flame and Blue Beetle, sold very well, while many others barely struggled along. Fox originated a long string of titles and characters, and can be credited as the man most responsible for introducing science fiction to the comics. He insisted on science fiction stories in all his anthology titles, even when by doing so he cut the sales of his books

But in 1946 all that was behind him. He was harder, colder, and a lot more mercinary this time round. The second round would be a little different. No more costly mistakes, no more sentimentality. He looked over the news stand selection and found what he wanted; the best of three worlds. Sexy women in comics were

the comic attraction, and apparently were finding ready acceptance with the reading audience. Fiction House was making a killing with jungle goddesses, and many other publishers, such as Nedor, were beginning to drop super hero and adventure titles to jump on the jungle band wagon. Big name crime was good business also. The old fairy tales apparently weren't good enough any more. Charles Biro had proven conclusively that real life crime, complete with corruption and human failure could sell millions of books. The third factor, the costumed hero, was still very much active, and seemed to exert as strong a universal appeal as it had when Fox had first began to publish comics back in 1939.

So Victor Fox made a purchase over at Quality and came back home with a minor character considered too triffling and weak for Quality Comics to bother with any more. Then he opened his new office and called in some of his old writters, now considerably matured, and some of his best old artists, who had by this time whetted their talents to a keen edge. Then he began issueing comics. There was BLUE BEETLE, once more wearing the familiar Fox shield emblem in the upper left hand corner, and RULAH JUNGLE GODDESS, and DAGAR DESERT FOX and JO JO KING OF THE CONGO and ALL TOP featuring four stories by the four best sellers in the line and also PHANTOM LADY.

Later would come other books, SEA GIRL FAMOUS CRIME CASES, CRIMES BY WOMEN, comics which would make the new Fox symbol infamous across the country. Blue Beetle would deteriate from a top notch crime fighter to a preverted book of sexual sadism, and Fox comics would be banned in towns and cities thruout the nation as unfit for youngsters to read. But the long dark days were to come later. The first flame was just being struck, and in the first flare of the match meeting kindling, came the subject of our study,

the Phantom Lady.

Phantom Lady was originally a Quality heroine, and appeared in POLICE COMICS from 1 thru 22. She was never very strong over at Quality, and they used her as they used hundreds of other characters, purely as a backup fill-in feature for POLICE to keep the page count fat and varried. She was the daughter of Senator Knight, altho he was conspiciously absent from most of the stories. She wore a yellow costume and stumbled over crime in the streets, and her adventures were always neatly wrapped up in no more than six pages, often less.

As Quality saw it, Phantom Lady was a conservative brunette who bore a suspicious resemblence to another Quality heroine, Miss America from over in MILITARY COMICS.

Phantom Lady as Fox saw her was a little different. She was still good old Sandra Knight, daughter of the eminent senator, only now it was crusading Senator Knight, who fought a never ending battle against the underworld in the committee halls of congress, and who managed to spend at least a few panels per issue with his offspring for a change.

Sandra also had a boy friend at Fox, good old bumbling, two left feet Don Bordon, a handsome blond haired playboy who had no visible means of support, but who made up for his lack of affluence and industry by sponging food and drink over at the Knight residence.

At Quality Phantom Lady had been mature and quietly attractive. Over at Fox she changed overnight into a baby faced bomb shell with more beauty than de milo and enough sex appeal to stop a locomotive.

A feature from Quality which Fox did retain was the concept of the costumed, but non super heroine. Unlike the hords of other costumed comic characters of the period, Phantom Lady fought crime on her own, and didn't even have a grab bag of trick gadgets to assist her in her battles. Whereas her neighbor down the hall, Blue Beetle, had originally gulped down gallons of vitiman enriched neutrant juice to sustain his failing prowness, and relied on a super-strong costume of re-enforced mail armor, Phantom Lady had only her keen wits and ready fists, and wore scarely no costume at all.

Indeed, considering she wasn't a jungle girl, her costume would have to be considered one of the most provokative ever to appear in comics. The Phantom Lady over at Quality had worn a pretty scanty outfit, but it was up to Fox to chop it down until there really wasn't too much left over.

The whole costume was designed not so much for utility's sake, as for its blatent sex appeal. She wore a pair of nearly skin tight panties, connected along the front with a strip of cloth which developed into a sort of halter like arrangement that accented ripe full breasts. She wore a red rib belt with an oversized PL engraved buckle to contract with the deep blue of the outfit, and in keeping with the spirit, if not the whole meaning of the costumed hero, she also wore a long sporty cape. It looked pretty good on her, but as with most caped crime fighters, it served absolutely no purpose at all.

Altho the comics indicated Phantom Lady was just a plucky young lass doing her bit against crime in the city, she must have had some sort of super powers to be able to run around in that costume issue after issue. She wore it thru blazing summer heat and right on into the dead of winter, right thru ice, snow and howling winds, and all this, apparently, without ill effect.

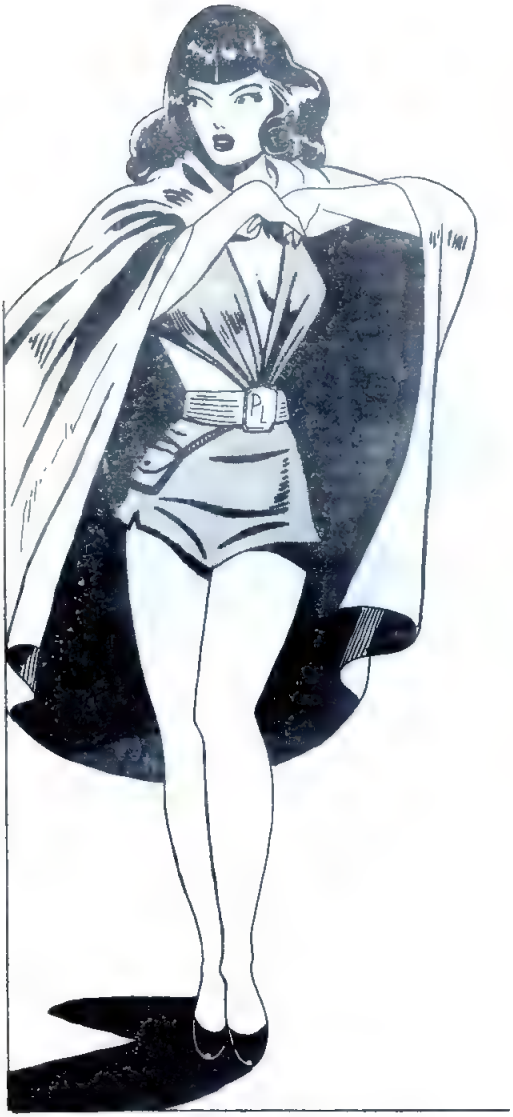
Phantom Lady dressed and ready for action made a rather striking picture. Of course, anything would have looked pretty good on Sandra Knight. She was without exception, the most beautiful heroine ever to appear in the comics. Only the artist geniuses over at Fiction House, whose concepts Fox was desperately trying to imitate much of the time, had the staff, or the imagination (not in the least to say,the guts) to come up with anything that even came close to matching Sandra's appearence, or her contineous state of undress both in and out of costume.

Phantom Lady had only one mechanical aid, and this was the handy Black Light. The Black Light was an ingenious piece of equipment, about the size of a lady's compact, only thicker,

which threw out a solid beam of darkness, much blacker than even the deepest of dreams. Whoever was caught in the all-engulfing beam enjoyed the benefits of total darkness. This, appearing in the heart of battle, was enough in most cases to convince hardened criminals that they had suddenly gone blind, and gave Phantom Lady the needed extra edge in the fight.

However a beam of blackness must have seemed pretty week to the editor, and after a few stories the indications were that in addition to the total blackout effect, that the light also created minor irritation to the eyes, causing them to burn and become enflamed. Whatever the explination, the Black Light made a formidable weapon whenever it was used, and Phantom Lady called on it fairly often.

The Black Light was usually carried by a strap attached to the belt PL wore. However she must have been rather careless with it. In one story criminals kidnap



Sandra Knight, and one thug picks up the Black Knight from her dressing table thinking it will make a good item to pawn later on. Likewise the artists had a way of forgetting all about it. In several scenes you might glance the light swinging from the strap attached to her belt, but oddly enough when you turn the page, the Black Light has disappeared while Phantom Lady is battling it out with fists and judo against the opposition. Artistically speaking, the black light appeared miraculiously out of thin air, then disappeared back into the nether dimensions whenever it had served its purpose and the action was rolling again.

While the Black Light was interesting, the main weapon Sandra brought to bear on the forces of crime were her keen wits. Too often women in comics, and also in other literature, are painted as either impulsive and hare brained, or passive and stupid. Loyality seems to be their other promicing virtue, and in general most comic book characters have tended to view women as either useless pawns, or scheming viscious animals which need to be exterminated as quickly as possible.

Even the female heroes, such few as there were, have enjoyed no really honest treatment from the comics. This is undoubtedly due in large part to the existence of Asimov's Hypothesis (see Mag of F&SF); that males thruout the ages have traditionally treated women as an inferior creature and assigned women positions of slavery

to the male, a situation which women thruout history have accepted almost unconsciously.

Phantom Lady therefore, was a violation of established tradition on several fronts. First, she dared to portray a woman who was a woman, and not just a warmed over version of the male animal with different hormone balances. Wonder Woman is perhaps the most obvious presentation of this last approach. Except for her basic feminine outline, she is virtually undistinguishable from the male counterparts in the DC stable. By contrast Phantom Lady was definitely alive, vibrant and absolutely feminine in all respects.

But more important than this, altho undoubtedly her sex appeal was a big sell with the adult buyers, was her ability to think and act like an intelligent human being, uncluttered by the bundle of sterotyped ideas and weaknesses which comic literature has traditionally assigned all women.

She was far more intelligent than her nit-wit boy friend who was so absent minded he couldn't even recognize his fiancee at ten paces when she was in uniform. She was the acting force behind her father's crime smashing investigations, and would probably have to rate as one of the few women detectives to ever appear in the comics.

Yet oddly enough, altho Phantom Lady was well trained in Ju Jitsu, and was free and easy with unladylike right hooks to the jaw, she herself recognized the real position of the role she attempted to carry thru. In a staggering concession to the limitations of her sex, she was the first to admit that a small woman would be sadly outmatched in any stand-up slug fest with hardened male criminals, and she was never too proud to run from the fray and try another type of attack when the ham handed opposition became too much for her.

Her real advantage was alertness, the ability to make use of the moment, and the absolute visciousness of her surprise attacks. She left as little to chance as possible, and when she struck, it was with the intention of putting the opposition out of business as quickly and effectively as possible. She used every means at her disposal, and it didn't bother her in the least to slug a criminal from behind, that was just one more hoodlum out of the running.

She wasn't much of a grand stander either. In many of the stories there are scenes in which PL first calls the police to let them know what is going on, then rushes in to delay the quary until the full reenforcements arrive. Phantom Lady obviously wasn't in the business to become a glory hound, she was there to prevent crime. Despite this, as you might expect, she came in for a good deal of publicity.

Her boy friend, Don Bordon in particular, idiolized Phantom Lady, and was always urging Sandra to take more interest in life, and to display a little more backbone, like, say, that crime busting Phantom Lady.

One of the most amazing absurdities in the history of comics was displayed in each and every story, when Sandra changed into her costume and noone, not her friends, associates, or even her father, was able to recognize Phantom Lady as Sandra Knight, even tho she never wore a mask of any kind, and didn't even make the courtesy attempt of changing her hair style. From reading the stories it seems that Sandra Knight is almost as well known to the public at large as her father, yet issue after issue nobody caught on. The good senator and Don follow her into fantastic adventures, and even while they are standing right beside her, they never suspect, even for an instant, that Sandra and PL are one and the same.

In ocassional stories, just to develop characterization, other people, outsiders who had never laid eyes on Sandra or Phantom Lady before, manage to catch clues. Several even suspect the truth. In PHANTOM LADY #18, she has just rescued an artist from being murdered, and at the end of the story he catches a glimpse of Sandra. "It...it's her! Phantom Lady! But she's...she's changed somehow..." The only thing changed of course were her clothes. Don Bordon thought this

implication was one of the most hilarious jokes he had ever heard. There mere suggestion that PL and Sandra might be one and the same was enough to send him into hysterics. Sometimes, rather often as a matter of fact, I wondered what Sandra ever saw in that jerk.

However, Don was an intricate part of the stories, much more so than Senator Knight, who played cameo roles thruout the series. Don on the other hand, was known to be a close friend of Phantom Lady, and entered into many of the adventures. In several instences when people are in trouble and want to contact PL, they came first to Don Bordon. His involvement and interest in crime cases was a spring-board for several stories, but somehow his Lois Lane effects never seemed to come off as well as they did for the Man of Steel.

In issue #17 we get the first inkling that maybe Don isn't as shiftless and lazy as he seems to be. He has a prize winning pony in the steeplechase races and is involved in big money winnings. But the real clincher came the following issue, #18, when he is involved in a phoney treasure hunt scheme, and wonders whether to invest two hundred thousand dollars. "If it failed, I'd be broke... and in debt to boot". How he ever came by this fortune, and how it maintained it was never explained.

Phantom Lady was down to earth and businesslike, and altho it is obvious that she got into the business to provide her with a few thrills in addition to her purer motives, she found plenty of action and corruption in every issue. Her career was an odd mixture of the weirdly fantastic and the absolute realism of trye life crime. There were never any super criminals or costumed clowns in her episodes, nor were many of her tales involved psycho ridden incidents of the type Daredevil loved to tackle. Diamond smugglers, kidnapping rings, bank robbers, spies, extortion rackets, con men and big city gangsters were the spice of life for our gal, and she gave them one and all a good run for the money. At the same time she shared adventures with werewolves, mad scientists, zombies, and a few fantastic inventions thrown in to keep the series honest and in tune with the publication media she enjoyed.

Phantom Lady signed on with Fox in August 1947, and leaped into the fray with her own magazine, PHANTOM LADY #13. I have not yet been able to determine who owned the first twelve issues of the book, but from then on it was Sandra's. At about the same time #7 appeared, containing four stories by the four characters Fox figured would be the best of his new line. He intended ALL TOP to be very much like the old BIG THREE COMICS, only with fewer pages. The first six issues of ALL TOP had been devoted to funny animal characters, not very good ones either. With issue #7 it dropped the talking animals in favor of Rulah, Jo Jo, Blue Beetle and Phantom Lady. It carried this same lineup with only one minor change right up until #16, the final issue.

The stories in the first issue of PHANTOM LADY looked astho they had been written a year or so earlier. The second adventure concerns itself with gestapo agents who seek to cripple America's fighting power with a weird invention, even tho Nazi Germany itself has already fallen. In this one issue, incidentally, PL rides around in a fantastic stub winged rocket car. In all following issues she would travel in whatever was handy, usely a high speed convertable, altho motorcycles always looked to me as tho they would suit her better.

Phantom Lady never had an origin at Fox either. Readers were susposed to know right away that she is Sandra Knight, daughter of the well known senator. Apparently everybody else did. In the very first story a criminal uses a robot made to look like Sandra to commit murder and robbery. The intention was to frame Sandra as a way of getting even with her father.

As a general rule the stories dealt with criminals you'd like to hate. There were no sympathy plays in Fox comics. The misguided wrong doers, the thrill seekers,

the Harlequins, Tricksters and Crime Doctors never found a home in his office. As Victor Fox saw it, crime was a deadly bacteria eating its way into the heart of civilization, and those who were contaminated by the deadly plaque were beyond redemption or human sympathy.

Phantom Lady herself displayed almost no compassion toward the criminal class. In most of the stories the master criminal dies at the end of the story, sometimes thru stupidy, but more often with the aid and assistence of PL while the crook is trying to escape her. Fox didn't hold with any weak kneed code against showing death in the comics. This was war, war against crime, and Phantom Lady learned fast to be just as ruthless as the underworld in her dealings.

In issue #15 she rams a hat pin thru the throat of a murdering foreign agent, who, just incidentally, was the only person to obtain proof postive that Sandra Knight and Phantom Lady were one and the same. In that same issue she holds a gun on a swindler and makes him sign over land deeds to his victims, and nobody, especially the reader, doubts for a second that she will use the gun if he doesn't co-operate. In #17 she lobs a hand granade back at protection racket thugs and cures one social evil in two panels of explosion.

Story wise about the only flaw you could find in a Phantom Lady plot is that she never seemed to have many problems finding where the action was. Like many another comic character, to help keep the page length within reason, she stumbled across many ready made adventures, with bullets, corpses and escapping mobsters dropping out every third page.

Virtually all the Phantom Lady issues are good reading. I find it almost impossible to pick a favorite story, because they were all so well developed and thought out. Each one has different points of interest. That adventure with the werewolf, with its surprise ending, now there was a case that would have given Batman trouble, but it didn't stop the Phantom Lady. Or the case of the fire fiend, where an investor's daughter is out to ruin her own father and doesn't stop at anything, even mass murder. The Red Rain case, with the foreign spy who used chemically treated red rain and a simple but undetectable murder weapon to spread terror along the east coast while secretly eliminating America's leaders...or the Case of the Substitute Cinderella, which looked like a close room mystery, and developed into a fantastic theme of a twin sister trying to steal the other's identity. All of them were good. I only found two PL stories I didn't especially care for, one because it was simply a Marvel style action incident without real story depth and detail, and the other because it looked too simple for a girl of Phantom Lady's talents.

Everything was right with the Phantom Lady, and it must have sold well too. Fox put everything he had into this last round, but it would all have been wasted without the fabulious artwork to back up the series. The illustration is clean, detailed, and displays a degree of realism and attention to human anatomy seldom seen in comic books.

The art on one story in the first issue is signed by Matt Baker, an artist who had done some previous work for the Classics Illustrated books. However his style does not seem to be very evident in later issues at all. The other stories are all unsigned, however I believe most of the Phantom Lady art was handled by Charles (Blackhawk) Cuidera. He did at least one entire issue (#15), his own inking style showing thru very clearly. The handling of figures and backdrops in other issues seems to identify with his style. Furthermore Cuidera had been a Fox artist in the past, and it seems reasonable that Fox called on him again when he revitalized his line of comics for a second shot at the big money.

The drawing is realistic, and sharp. Most of the emphasis is placed on the human characters who occupy the foreground in at least seventy five percent of the panels. These figures are always carefully laid out. The background is also

well done, but is generally kept simple and uncluttered so long as the picture focus remains on the human actors. When the story shifts so that a greater view of the background is demanded, then the art shifts also, and reaches out to gather in the backdrop with the same simple, but precise detail displayed on the human features.

As an example, when Phantom Lady and a criminal are talking or fighting it out in the foreground, the scene contends itself almost exclusively with the central characters, and the background is left free and open so that it does not detract from the figures in the foreground. As the criminal breaks away and runs toward a building in the background, the art perspective shifts, and the reader's attention is drawn toward the building, which is now seen in complete detail, with the criminal, as a secondary focus, racing toward it, and Phantom Lady, the sliding focus in the foreground giving chase.

This ability to make use of focus and perspective was extremely important in keeping the art attractive and helping the story build. Since many of the PL adventures are elongated crime adventures requiring much dialog in addition to close-in

action shots, a careful treatment artistically is essential if the comics is to be successful. Excellent examples of how badly this kind of story can be blotched if the wrong art style is used can be seen on the Lev Gleason books during their last years, in which the artist tries to show an entire scene in mineateur with the figures and the background all equally detailed, and no center forcus or continuity from panel to panel. Another good example would be true of the Atlas Comics about 1953 and 54, where the characters and backgrounds are literally blugeoned to death by the oversized word baloons.

Fox was exceptionally lucky to have the caliber of artistic talent working for him that he did. Yet near the end of his reign his art staff failed him. He used third rate artists for his true crime exposures, and finally in the final two issues of Phantom Lady the over crowded, sketchy type of art he had avoided before then finally caught up. The scenes were cramped, the word baloons stand out from the cluttered up overly detailed panarama of color and black below to detract from the whole story pattern.

But actually the artistic breakdown in the last two issues of Phantom Lady were foretold many months before. Crime was good for Fox, a bit too good. He couldn't resist tinkering with even his better selling comics. In issue #16 he introduced a true crime story into the back pages of PHANTOM LADY. PL herself is only seen on the front cover as a mineateur circle shot. The bloody crime cases were all narrated by Phantom Lady, and they must have been popular with someone, because every issue from #16 until the final issue carried one of these blood stained stories.

Each of them claimed to be true and exact cases of real criminal careers.

WANTED

I need the following comics in very good to mint condition. Not interested at this time in doing any trading with anyone. Please state price and condition in your first letter.

Robert Jennings, 3819 Chambers Drive, Nashville, Tenn. (37211)

Showcase 1-3, 5-7, 9-16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24
Kid Colt 21, 22, 25-27, 29, 30, 32, 35, 39, 43, 45-48
50, 51, 54-57, 59, 60, 63, 76, 85, 93, 102
Badmen of the West #1
Black Knight 2, 4
Straight Arrow 53
Tim Holt/Redmask 1, 3, 16, 17, 20, 21, 24, 25, 33, 46, 49
Blackhawk 17, 22, 27-30, 34, 38, 42, 43, 46
Durango Kid 13, 38
Gunsmoke Western almost all
White Indian 12, 13
The Avenger 1, 3
Black Phantom (ME western) #2
Fighting Yank 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 15, 16, 19-29
Black Terror 1-5, 9, 11, 16, 19, 20, 22, 25, 27
Exciting most issues
Wild Western 1, 2, 15-17, 22, 24, 27, 30, 32, 35, 36
40, 42-44, 46, 47, 49, 54, 58---
Space Patrol all but #2
Startling most issues
Thrilling 1, 3, 4, 6-10, 12-28, 30-32, 34, 35, 38, 40
55-59, 67, 68
Manhunt #12
Undercover Girl 1-5
American Air Forces 3, 5, 6
The US Marines (ME only) 1, 2, 4-6, 8
Thunda 1, 3, 7
Military/Modern Comics 14, 20-22, 27, 29, 32, 53, 79
89, 90, 99
Tarzan 15-23, 26, 27, 29-31 35, 51, 55, 72, 81, 91, 104
Wonderworld 1-3, 7, 9, 13-15, 20-33
Mysterymen most issues
Blue Beetle many issues
Fantastic 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12-16, 18, 20-23
Weird 2-8, 11, 13---
Science 1, 5, 7, 8
Big Three 4-7
Eagle 1, 2, 4
Flame all
Samson all
Rex Dexter of Mars #1
Bouncer 1-10
Green Mask most issues
US Jones 1, 2
V... all

In almost every case the criminal was a killer, a sadistic monster who smashed and robbed his way thru ten pages of action until a hail of police bullets or the electric chair snuffed out another wasted life. I doubt that Fox had much time to dig thru back issue newspapers picking up these stories. More likely he and his staff hacked them out in the front office for immediate publication.

By the middle of 1948 Fox was firmly committed to the true crime comic. He was now following in the footsteps of the Lev Gleason books, as Fox, along with EC, Standard, Harvey and many lesser lights, all jumped on the crime bandwagon, and citizens groups across the country began to jump on the comics, hard.

PHANTOM LADY was one of the first to suffer from the shift in policy, and the long decline that was to follow. By the first of 1949 the color printing had began to slip. With issue #22 PHANTOM LADY was being printed on a cheaper, coarser grade of paper, and the artwork inside, along with the stories, had also deteriated. The art was darker, and much more hurried. Only the cover retained the purity and neatness older readers had come to expect. The evident rush job on the art is very evident. In one story Don Bordon is susposed to be tied up, yet the artist hasn't bothered to show any ropes. The stories relied now on cliche reasoning and coincidence to solve the crimes that occured.

With issue #23, April 1949, PHANTOM LADY died. It wasn't the most glorious death in the world. She didn't exit at the peak of her career, nor did she go out kicking and screaming and fighting every inch of the way. She died with a simple editorial decision, and suddenly her book, and a lot of other heroes just weren't there any more. All the bodily functions of a healthy comic book had been suddenly disrupted by a financial disaster which couldn't be cured. The story quality had dropped, the art was second rate, the paper was poor, the printing was sloppy. It was a good time to die. Fox tried to slug it out with the true crime books a little while longer, but the competition in that market was simply too great. He had made a wrong guess when he committed himself to the crime market, and so for the second time Fox Feature Syndicates went out of business.

But this was not to be the end of the Fox heritage, or the Phantom Lady. There is yet another chapter. Robert Farrell had been an editor over at the Holyoke comics when Fox had first disappeared from comics. When Fox died a second time, Farrell bought up his holdings. And suddenly Ajax-Farrell comics began hitting the stands. They specialized in horror comics mainly, well drawn ones, but the rising tide of indignation which had begun with crime comics finally wiped out the horror titles, and in one big rush Farrell got out of the horror business and into costumed heroes.

In something less than inglorious style he attempted to bring back the old Fox heroes. The Flame and Samson rose from the grave for a short and uneventful fling at crime busting. And poor Phantom Lady, the best of the later Fox creations, was also brought back.

But by now it was 1954, and the CCA was in existence, and exerting its power with complete indescretion. In order to get distribution Farrell had to submit Phantom Lady to their censorship. It was a horrible example of stupidity. The shorts developed into burmudas that almost reached down to the knee, the breasts shrunk alarmingly, the face broadened, and she wore a top that covered her from shoulder to waist. She looked like a mis-shappen adult who had never reached puberty.

Farrell tried one or two original stories, none very encouraging, but in order to skim on the money, he tried to adapt the old sucessful Fox stories to the new Phantom Lady. The old stories had been realistic and intelligent. But the CCA didn't think kids ought to know about murder, or robbery, or extortion, and so they chopped up those stories, and when Farrell got them back they read as tho every third panel had been eliminated. It was a horrible, horrible experiment in failure. The new Phantom Lady endured 5 issues. Farrell filled out his books with harmless reprints

Phantom Lady as Farrell saw her in 1954-55

from the old Holyoke comics, plus real life educational material and funny animals, and in 1955 when Phantom Lady died again, so did Ajax-Farrell.

There is a foot note. In 1957 a comic called STRANGE JOURNEY appeared. It used the old Ajax-Farrell horror stories, but the dialog and art had been doctored, rather crudely, so that they could slip by the CCA. The book only lasted a few issues, but it was obvious that not only had the entire Fox file of art and stories survived, but also that Farrell's own backlog was still in existence somewhere

Real proof of this came in 1960 and 1961, when a company working from a hotel room in New York City began issueing old comic books from the late forties and early fifties using the original art proofs. They were known as IW Publications, and none of their material carried the CCA seal. Among the various reprints which

they carried were PHANTOM LADY #14 and 15, used as part of their DARING MYSTERY series. Those files today are being used by yet another New York publisher who is reissueing horror comics in a black and white 50¢ medium as competition for CREEPY and EERIE.

And what about Phantom Lady, the beautiful little girl who fought her way across 23 issues of her own book, and who, along with Rulah, Jo Jo and Blue Beetle, kept Fox alive until he began experimenting with his success?

She, I'm afraid, is gone forever. There is no possibility of her ever returning. Nothing about her, her costume or appearence, stories or even the concept would be acceptable to editors and publishers today. Fox created her in an attempt to reach the teenage and adult market. He succeeded, but today people no longer believe in comics as popular literature. Comics are considered children's literature, and if there's one thing PL could never be, it's a child's funny book. She could never fit the mold of medocirty that comics have settled into today. Her career spans 23 issues and 9 short stories in ALL TOP. It is a brief glance, a bitter-sweet look at a piece of comic greatness. Once, at least once, we had a real female crime fighter in comics. Let's not push our luck too far. Let her rest in peace, and battle on only in the back issues and in the veils of our imaginations. She's too good to be destroyed by the heavy handed techniques in style today. But if you ever happen to see a man named Victor Fox, who used to promote comic books and other things, I wish you'd pass along a word or two of thanks, from me. I think he really deserves it.

INFORMATION CENTER

Information Center is a readership feature of COMIC WORLD which will attempt to answer any and all questions pretaining to the comics field. We invite your questions to Information Center. Any question concerning any phase of comicdom may be asked, and each issue the most interesting questions and answers will be printed in this colume. If you have a question, simply type or write it on an index card, or on a piece of paper separate from your letter, and send it, along with one unused six cent stamp to help defray expenses to Robert Jennings, 3819 Chambers Drive, Nashville 11, Tenn. (37211). In order to be fair about this, we are going to have to limit each person to three questions per six cent stamp. Much correspondence is required to run down the answers to these questions, and while the Information Center staff is interested in helping you whenever we can, postage costs have a way of mounting up in a surprisingly short time, and none of us is rich (that I know of anyway). If more than three questions are asked and only one six cent stamp is enclosed, only the first three questions will be considered. If you wish a personal reply to your questions, as many of you undoubtedly will, then please enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope in addition to the unused six cent stamp(s). We don't promice to be able to answer every single question posed, but we certainly will try our best to supply the needed information. Corrections, offers of assistence, additional information, and the like are always appreciated. With the ground rules out of the way, let's move on to some questions...

The first question this time round comes from Clifford Bowlan who asks "What was the last issue of YOUNG ALLIES COMICS?"

The Young Allies were six American boys who decided to get together and fight for freedom back in 1941. They were a timely property, and the first issue of their own book appeared in Summer 1941. The actual members of the group were Bucky, Captain America's junior partner, Toro, the Human Torch's juvenile sidekick, Tubby Whitewash, Jeff and Knuckles, who had no super powers.

THE YOUNG ALLIES was a quarterly comic which saw a total of 20 issues, the final one being dated October 1946. The Young Allies also turned up in MARVEL MYSTERY 75-83, SUBMARINER #22 and also in the second series MYSTIC 3 and 4. Their stories were varried and so was the art. They were apparently popular for the time they were published, but not strong enough to compete with the other costumed heroes in the Timely lineup.

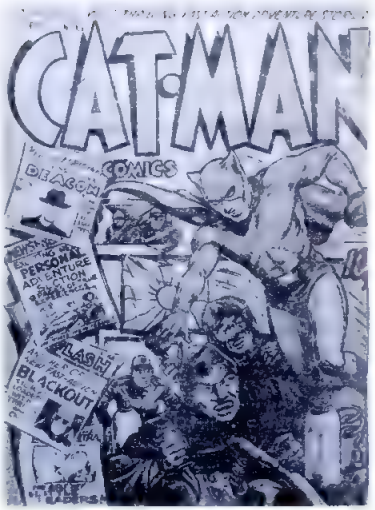
We have a couple of questions here on Batman, namely whether or not he has ever carried a gun and/or killed anyone.

Technically speaking Batman has never carried a gun. There is a cover shot of him in DETECTIVE 33 which shows Batman leaping off a bridge, and wearing a side holster. Batman has killed a few people in his time, mostly by accident, and one villain, in BATMAN #1, by cold blooded pre determination. However, by and large Batman has been allergic to guns in any form. Early in his career the concept was developed that he never carried a weapon, and refused, even in times of dire crisis, to rely on fire arms either for his own protection or for offensive purposes.

Very likely this concept was borrowed directly from the Doc Savage pulp stories. A great number of the early Batman stories read like pulp novels adapted to the comic page, and Bill Finger, who wrote most of these, probably had a hand in solidifying the new idea against firearms. Doc Savage, the modern super-human adventuror, didn't use firearms because he thought that anyone using such tools as extensions of his powers soon began to depend on them too heavily. Doc Savage was the kind of guy who could crawl up eight six stories to the top of a sky scraper in a high wind using only his finger nails. He didn't need firearms.

The artists and writers at Batman have pretty well milked the weapons concept dry, and you can find many inside story splace pages where Batman is holding a gun, fireing a weapin, in the process of killing someone, or in other ways seeming to violate his code of ethics against firearms. Actually the stories themselves never allowed the masked crime fighter to go back on his sacred vows and with only a few editorial blunders in between Batman hasn't picked up a weapon to use it since 1940.

William Clark wants to know something about Catman and Catman comics.



Catman Comics was the product of the Holyoke Publishing company, with the first issue appearing in May 1941. CATMAN COMICS lasted a total of 32 issues, breathing its last on August 1946.

Catman was the artist triumpth of Charles M. Quinlan, who was one of the best artists Holyoke ever had. In addition to the Catman he also did work on a few issues of Blue Beetle before it deteriated so completely, and did odds and ends work on the other Holyoke publications.

Catman was actually Lt. David Merrywether of the US Army, who happened to have a niece named Katie Conn that accompanied him everywhere. He was apparently a trouble shooter for the army, because he never seemed to be assigned to any one unit or army group. He spent a lot of time riding around the country to inspect various instillations and call on many scientists who had fantastic inventions to sell Uncle Sam, and thus always managed to find trouble along the way.

After determining that this was a really serious problem he would slip into costume and become Catman, accompanied in all his stories by Katie dressed as the Kitten. Of the pair Kitten was probably the smartest. She was always on the alert for strange happenings, and was quick to pin-point the obvious problem while poor ole Uncle David was brushing off her suspicions and walking straight into a trap.

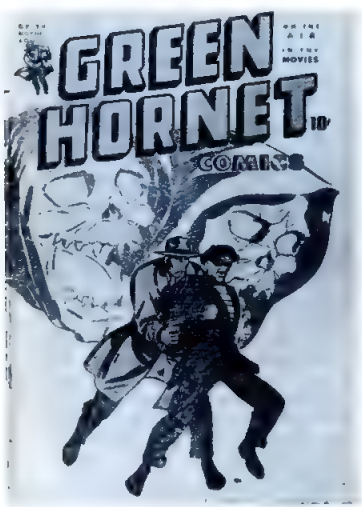
Catman's costume was pretty much what you'd expect from a character with that kind of name. He wore a cat-like hood that cover his face and left his mouth area free, a short vaguely triangular cloak was attached to the hoot. A long sleeved skin tight T-shirt was orange in color, and he wore red trunks to match the red cloak and hood. Kitten's costume is almost identical to Catman's.

Catman only had one story in every issue of CATMAN COMICS, which may seem rather strange, but that's the way Holyoke handled all their comics. He shared the anthology with the Deacon and Mickey, a clergyman with a nose for crime, Blackout, a fairly good costumed hero who fought underground in occupied Europe, Rag-man, a pedestrian big city crime fighter whose stories seemed to be to be completely pointless about ninety percent of the time. Then there was Vp;tpm the human generator, an off color imitation of Pyroman drawn from time to time by Sol Brodsky, and Phantom Flacon, who was a real loser. In real life Phantom Flacon was an American flier. When his eagle squadran got the call for action, he suddenly disappeared from the formation, to don the costume and jump into the weird plane of the Phantom Flacon. Then he proceeded to shoot up enemy airplanes and the like. Why he couldn't do the same thing in his civilian identity is never explained. The final feature was the Little Leaders, starring Mickey from the Deacon strip, and Kitten from Catman.

That was the whole lineup. The art was presentable, but the stories, except for the Little Leaders, and ocassional adventures with Catman and Blackout were pretty average. Many fans seem to like Catman. So far as I'm concerned it was a second string comic by a third rate company.

Jim Toren wants to know something about Green Hornet in his own comic.

The Green Hornet was first introduced on the radio. He was secretly Brett Reid the publisher of the crusading Daily Sentinal. When editorializing and existing laws failed to bring a solution to a crime problem, then Reid and his faithful Phillipeno servant Kato changed into costume and became the Green Hornet. Indeed, as the opening to the radio show itself said, the Green Hornet existed "that racketeers and criminals within the law, shall feel it's weight, by the sting of the Green Hornet!"



The Green Hornet stung once a week for almost eighteen years on radio, and was one of the big three programs of Trendall-Campbell Moore, the WXYZ combination that also created the Lone Ranger and Sgt Preston. It's interesting to note that Brett Reid was himself the great grandson of the Lone Ranger, whose name you trivia fans will recall, was also Reid.

Green Hornet came to the comics in a smash first issue dated Dec 1940, and lasted 47 issues, leaving the comics field in September 1949. It was published by Harvey, and was a very faithful reproduction of the radio style.

The Green Hornet was considered an outlaw, one of the most fiendish criminals to ever come into existence, and it was part of his trade mark to appear to be part of every crime and every racket he smashed. He was armed with a gas gun which shot a harmless sleep gas that put its victims under for about an hour, and he rode around in a heavy, super charged black autombile known as the Black Beauty. It was big and boxy, but it could outrun everything on the road.

The Green Hornet's style was usually to locate the source of the problem, and then to pretend that one member of the gang had cut him in on the racket if he would kill off another one of the gang members. A variation was to demand to be cut in on the loot or else he would sing to the cops. In any case the criminal master minds always betrayed themselves, often before witnesses, and while the police carted the gang away the Green Hornet made good his usual escape. The trail ending of each Green Hornet radio show was a newsboy, carrying the latest extra of the Daily Sentinal, screaming, "Extreeee Protection Racket (or whatever) Smashed, Gang leaders under indictment. Green Hornet Implicated! Read all About it, Green Hornet Still At Large!! Extreeeee!"

Today, of course, a comic character who pretended to be a criminal, and was as ruthless as the Green Hornet would be considered too daring for modern publication. That's all this round, next time we'll try to make up for the lack of space this time.

THE BLACK CANARY

by
TOM FAGAN

reprinted from COMIC WORLD #1, June 1962
original distribution 150 copies

When one chose issue #86 of FLASH COMICS from the bewildering multi-colored selection on the newstand back in 1947, there was little to indicate a spectacular star was rising on the ten cent horizon of comicdom.

Indeed, that August dated publication had Flash cometing to the rescue of a bound maiden, already eyed for a tastey supper by the dinasaur monstrocity featured on the cover. Hawkman was depicted in diminutivewinged-wonder in the circle space beside the logo title.

One, mildly curious, read thru the "fastest man alive"'s latest venture to see how he fared with the stone-age menace. Then with a ho-hum, the reader prepared, as usual, to struggle thru the latest Johnny Thunder adventure.

But many an eye opened suddenly and many a male lip pursued in a low appreciative whistle. Here was something new. Something that National Comics was presenting without pliminary fan fare.

There sat Johnny Thunder, thunderstruck at the figure before him. Comic hearts, depicting a love-lost lad, whirled about his head. Behind the completely unawares Johnny, stood two gangsters, one about to crush in Johnny's skull with a

black jack, and at the same time pointing out to his machine-gun carrying companion to finish off the figure striding down a sordid looking alleyway.

And what a figure---graceful, curvatious, shapely, goshwow, and any number of other approperiate adjectives one might wish to use to describe that bit of feminity that was to become known as THE BLACK CANARY!

From the crown of her long blond flowing hairdo, to the top of her cavalier styled boots, Black Canary was fascinating. Accentuating her costume were colors of purple and blue, and as befitted her name, hues of jet black.

Black Canary was drawn so her appearence was feminine with the emphasis on the female, but lines were introduced here and there to lend an idea of physical strength. Star-gazers (Johnny Thunder included) nodded in appreciation at the diamond shaped mask, hiding partally the facial features.

A bolero-type jacket of blue swung unfastened to reveal a graceful upper body and thigh proportions that were clothed in a purple garment, beginning at the beasts and ending in a cross between a swirling skirt or sun-suit effect. Skin tight blue leg coverings were set off by black criss-crossings of net. Rakish pirate, purple-black boots, rising to shin height complete the costume.

This completed the garb, except for a neckless with a center locket. This locket was to have an important bearing on Black Canary's later career, but in her first adventure, it merely served as a decorative bit of jewelry. Her coiffure was also to become of importance as time went on. But all this was to be in the future unknown to readers of issue #86 and to Johnny Thunder.

In her initial appearance, Black Canary appeared a bit promiscuous and not on the side of the law at all. Standing in the shadows, with street lights outlinging her provocative features, Black Canary sought Thunder's aid with a suggestive, "Handsome, will you help me please?" Typewriters are equiped to add the musical notes the artist used to follow up this request.

Simple-minded Johnny Thunder was ready and willing to help out the "maiden in destress" who explained away her style of dress as a masquerade costume.

Thunder was subsequently employed as a dupe by Black Canary to carry out a crime of burglary. However, admirers of the Robin Hood type legend, were somewhat relieved to discover "the most fascinating crook of all time" (being Black Canary, naturally), robbing only from fellow crooks.

Johnny's magic thunderbolt saved the day for Thunder and Canary both. Black Canary skipped away in the excitement of the arrest of the real-bad crooks and Johnny, with hearts still swirling about his head, pondered "Will I ever see her again?" The common-sense Thunderbolt warned a pouting Johnny about "falling in love with beautiful villanesses". Johnny might well have heeded this warning, for, within a short time...

Black Canary had stolden Johnny's thunder, taking over his place in FLASH COMICS, and demurely occuping his membership status in the Justice Society of America. Today, National Periodical editor Julius Schwartz recalls:

> "The artwork on THE BLACK CANARY (FLASH and ALL STAR) was done by CARMINE INFANTINO (altho there may have been isolated instences where other artists had a hand in it).
>
> The feature was originated by author Robert Kanigher (in FLASH). As I recall, her appearance in the JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA was handled by John Broome."

Indeed, back then Black Canary had the very best working for her.

Down the September avenues of FLASH COMICS #87, raced the Black Canary of 1947, looking for "JOHNNY THUNDER! The very man!" Black Canary has been out crook-robbing again, and poor John is to be pulled into the midst of her adventures, to be slapped, beaten, brused and even lowered along with Miss Canary,

into a pool of alligators with coracious appetites. Getting out of the jam with his Boy Scout knife, Johnny realizes Johnny realizes Black Canary has actually filched evidence "that will convict a dangerous criminal."

Unhappily the adventure ends with Thunder, dreamily studying a not from his diamond masked lady love, stating, "may we meet again in our war against crime."

Naturally said note was signed with a picture of a...you guessed it, a black canary, if such a bird does actually exist.

Readers breathed a little sigh of relief. By jingo, Black Canary was on the side of law and order after all. Who, in their ever loving blue eyed mind, would want a girl friend that was liable to end up any day behind bars, even if she did go around robbing only from the bad guys.

Issue #88 of FLASH COMICS (Oct 1947) was a repeat preformance of triumpth over evil by Black Canary, with Johnny Thunder and the magic thunderbolt playing major roles also.

With a Mother Goose nursery rhyme touch, the pretty crime fighter sends jocular John a pie, from which, when opened, flies a chirping black canary.

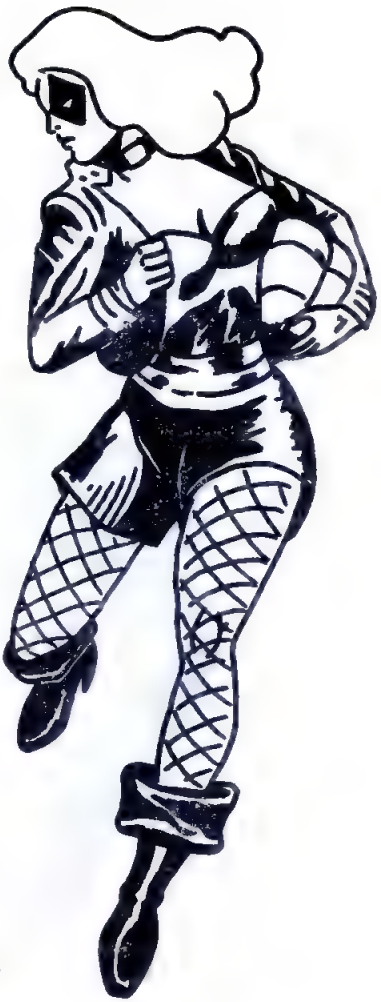
Thunder booms out in pursuit of the elusive bird, finds the lady sender, bound and gagged by underworld hoodlums. Observing readers noted that Black Canary was no longer masked.

Canary and John are "caged" in an oversized bird cage, flown aloft by helicopter and uncermoniously dropped to the hard earth below. The magic thunderbolt, always a "willing guardian angel", saved both a happy story ending and Miss Canary for posterity.

Johnny Thunder? Oh yes, he was saved too...but not for long. His day was fast coming.

FLASH 89 (Nov 1947) was a startling issue. Flash himself came to odds with a lady villain, the Thorn. But pages were flipped rapidly to center fold for the Johnny Thunder adventure.

BLACK CANARY as she appeared in FLASH COMICS #87



But we were in for a shock---no Black Canary appearance! What gave anyway? Johnny Thunder, in solo action, ended up his tale with a request to "teach me to mind my own business," and nothing more.

How prophetic was Johnny last statement. He should have minded his own business back in issues 86, 87 and 88. He should have, but didn't, for Black Canary, unmasked as she was to be the rest of her career, reappeared in the Dec 1947 issue.

In the adventure entitled "Triple Exposure" John and his "crime-clouting companion" (National's love of alliteration was showing again) were rossed into a vat of gasoline.

This dunking didn't affect Black Canary's coiffure much. At least the effect didn't jive with facts presented in later adventures.

A word might be introduced at this point, to indicate the drawings of hoodlums in the Black Canary and Johnny Thunder adventures. They were muchmore likelife and not stero-typed or bizarre criminal figures such as were and are found in many comic adventures, Batman to name one in particular.

Came the new year of 1948 and in the January Issue (#91) Johnny Thunder blissfully dreamed on about his lady bird love, apparently not caring that again, as in his previous adventure, the trip was now titled JOHNNY THUNDER AND THE BLACK CANARY. Tied to rockets, BC and JT, along with an unconscious magic thunderbolt, were shot into eternity. They returned in time to collar the missile-minded thugs and to allow National to announce---"Watch for the BLACK CANARY in her own feature! Coming to FLASH COMICS in the next issue!"

Larry Lance

Now you can't really admire Flash and Hawkman for what they did in the Feb 1948 issue of FLASH COMICS (#92). After all, Johnny Thunder had been a conpanion of theirs since the first issue, Jan 1940.

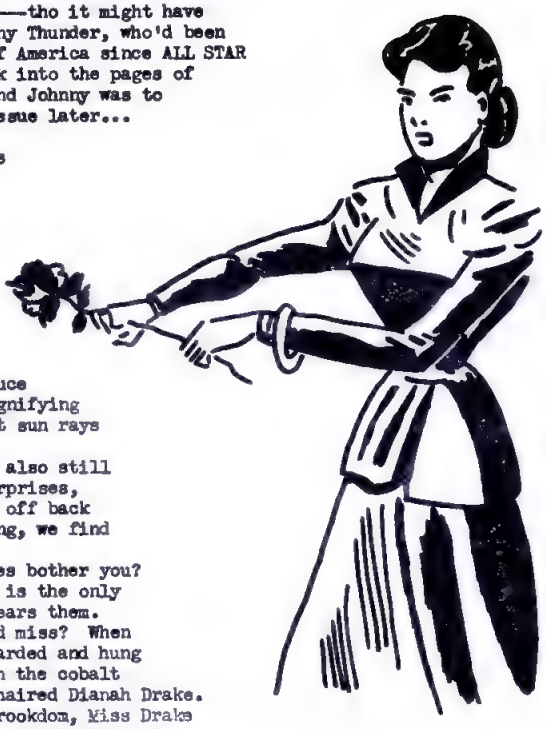
Eight years of bossom-buddyship should have ended with at least a "so long pal, we'll see you around" or similiar friendly farewell.

But femine wiles are disarming, And after all, the man of speed and the winged wonder were only human---comic book human that is.

And so, their faces wreathed in smiles, Flash and Hawkman took their places on issue #92's cover, to hold a large hoop, as Black Canary burst thru the paper covering.

"At last! THE BLACK CANARY in a feature of her own!" excitedly pro-

claimed the cover. It was her's alone all right. Johnny Thunder had been ousted from FLASH COMICS completely. (Incidentally---tho it might have meant a great deal to Johnny Thunder, who'd been with the Justice Society of America since ALL STAR #3---Black Canary had smuck into the pages of ALL STAR with issue #38, and Johnny was to be ousted from there one issue later... for good.



Presumably few readers missed old JT's absence from FLASH #92. Readers were too busy studying the solo-featured Canary.

Still the same costume, but the neck locket is now the shape of a canary. It's also a mineature "utility belt" affair, being able to produce when needed, a knife or magnifying glass, utilizing convenient sun rays to burn away bonds.

The blond coiffure is also still there. But surprise of surprises, considering it didn't fall off back in that gasoline vat dunking, we find it's really a wig.

Do those purpose gloves bother you? They won't for long. This is the only other issue Black Canary wears them.

Who is this bird-named miss? When the blond coiffure is discarded and hung up in the closet along with the cobalt blue costume, she's ravin-haired Dianah Drake.

While not pestering crookdom, Miss Drake managed a flowershop, conveniently located, as all sorts of crimes seem to happen nearby.

Dinah Drake is true blue, and one doesn't have to wonder about her feminity. Secretly she's quite font of one Larry Lance, a private eye.

Lance's business isn't always a prosperous one. Ocassionally, he's forces to use the flower shop as a part time office, until he can pay the rent for more businesslike quarters.

Now with this switch in story line, and Black Canary introduced as a "mistress of Jui-Jitsu, the plots become more detailed and believable. There is no magic thunderbolt to come to the rescue, only Black Canary's cunning and Lance's fighting ability to bring stories thru to a logical ending.

Lending plausibility to Black Canary's adventures (at least in FLASH COMICS) was the absense of hyper-powered criminals, alien space monsters and supernatural villains.

Miss Canary and Lance, from issue #92 on thru #104, fought believable criminals

criminals in mystery plot situations. In "Mystery of the Crimson Crystal" (#93, Mar. 1948) the dauntless pair battle a cult of women, led by a male swami who preached the legend that ownership of the crystal meant you would live forever.

Black Canary and Lance, thru good old-fashioned common sense and a punch or two, expose the swami for the religious charlatan he was and warned the women against future gullibility.

Lance even got shot in the shoulder before the case was finished, a rather surprising touch of realism in a comic book tale. Quite humanly, Lance also liked to take credit for a sucessful case conclusion.

> "Before the BLACK CANARY knew what was happening, she was unexpectedly involved in two murders...an old one and a brand new one! And before she was thru with this baffling case, there was almost a third...her own...!"

Thus began, "Crime on her Hands!" the latest Black Canary adventure in FLASH 104, dated Feb 1949. Before the tale concluded, the famale "crime clouter" got clouted herself with a gun butt, shot at numerous times, gasses, and in general shoved around accompanied by Lance.

Both emerged unscathed (Lance still unaware of Black Canary's secret identity), and the tale ended with a footnote, "Another spine-tingling, crime clouting BLACK CANARY episode in every issue of FLASH COMICS".

What an ill-fated promice! For the woman who could easily overcome the worse the underworld had to offer, could not cope with National's decision to conclude publication of FLASH COMICS then and there.

FLASH COMICS was gone, and Black Canary now lingered on for two years in the pages of ALL STAR COMICS. This is how she joined that austere society in the first place...

It must be admitted that the male contingent of the JSA had gotten along without the ladies very well in their confrontations with various bizarre criminals. True enough Red Tornado had breezed in along with the boys, but only in ALL STAR #3, while Wonder Woman made the scene eight issues later to wrangle the job of Society secretary.

But all this was before the Dec-Jan 52 page publication of ALL STAR 38. 1947 gave way to 1948, and gentlemen---look out. As Eve enticed Adam, Wonder Woman suddenly became an active fighting member, And that wasn't all that was going on.

Suddenly, the "most ruthless villains of another time", sprang mysteriously to life. Nero played his violin as he watched the heroic Dr. Midnight plunge to his death. Goliath split the Atom, while Captain Kidd, with ball and powder, blasted the Flash into eternity. Green Lanturn went to his demise, tasting the kiss of death from Ceasare Borgia's poison ring.

Genghis Khan sliced down the flying Hawkman. Still around at the time, the last JSA member, Johnny Thunder, met up with Atilla the Hun, to be whipped from a speeding sportscar, and as if that wasn't enough, bashed into the beyond by the weighted whip handle.

While all this was taking place, who should steal stealthily out of the pages of FLASH COMICS into the here-to-fore one-woman land of ALL STAR? None other than the Black Canary.

It was fortunate indeed for the JSA that she did. For Black Canary was to discover the dying Johnny Thunder, who managed to gasp..."Haven't much time...left! Black Canary...listen carefully! Going to...break rule of...Justice Society...But.. Listen..."

As Johnny Thunder's eyes roll back into his head and his mouth drops open, Black Canary, still holding the body of the man who had given her her first big chance---grieves (with explamation marks, naturally, as all good comic heroes and heroines do)---unaware that Attila is tip-toeing up behind her.

The whip is raised...and then...

The story is interrupted for a Wheaties advertisment, and an important message from Tootsie Rolls.

Someone else besides Attila should have been sent to do the job on Black Canary. For the hard-headed miss has managed to survive, and remembering Johnny's message, drags herself to secret JSA headquarters.

Here, Black Canary, holding hand to aching brow, barely is able to tell Wonder Woman what has transpired. "Racing against time which has already stopped beating for her 'fellow' members, Wonder Woman collects their remains."

These were the days before the comics code, and the reader was treated to the sight of six gaily-garbed corpses lying in state, with a now recovered Black Canary and Wonder Woman looking on.

However, a "purple healing ray" restores the intrepi restores the intrepid masculine sextet to life and each sets off fighting mad to do in the respected villain that had done him in.

The boys are mildly sucessful for each killer, once collared, blows apart on contact, and each JSA awakes to find that he, along with the others, is being covered with molten wax to become "private amusment" for a manical wax works guard.

The wax fiend carefully explains it was he who imitated each villain, and further, recreated rooot images of the historic scamps, one set which exploded as planned, and another set that now stands beside him.

But there's something wrong; there's susposed to be only six recreated villains. Now there are seven, and the seventh is Lucrezia Borgia, who now approaches the wax worker, demanding testily, "How dare ye masquarade as a royal Borgia, knave?"

"You've risen from the dead," quakes the wax worker, who then dutifully

follows Borgia's bidding, until extrodinary room heat melts a mask to reveal, not Lecrezia, but Black Canary. The jig is up.

A crazed lunge, a miss, a "Eeeehhhhh!!" and an "Aaaaaaaggggghhhhh——" and the wax worker meets his maker in the manner he planned for the JSA.

"Hurray for the Black Canary", sing out the six skimirshers. This was a far different greeting given her than in the first part of the story, when they had told her she was nothing but an "outsider" even tho they owed their lives to her pluckiness and hard head.

Yet, like the wax, the JSA gentlemen have cooled off, having been rescued a second time. Yet no one can blaim Black Canary for now walking away, downcast and mumbling, "Well, I guess I'll run along. I know you Justice Society of America members...have important things...to do...wouldn't want me around...Good by!"

This might well be considered the greatest put down in comics history, and if ever a bunch of super-guys deserved it, the JSA did. Little was said, consequentally, when, at their meeting, Wonder Woman turned toward an opening door, to state "Yes——we have an honorary guest——"

There wasn't a male-peet of protest, when Wonder Woman offered an "extra chair" to Black Canary, saying "And some day——we hope to have her as a regular member of the Justice Society."

Womanhood was on its way in ALL STAR #39, vintage Feb-Mar 1948, when Black Canary battled heroically alongside the costumed crew coping with "The Invasion From Fairyland". One was almost certain at this point Wonder Woman was going to have a female buddy who's also going to be just one of the boys.

Black Canary sat in the secret chambers of the JSA as casually as if she had been a life-long member by the time ALL STAR #40 hit the 1948 Apr-May mark. Johnny Thunder, who'd been around the ALL STAR permises since #3 was, for the first time, missing. And no one seemed to care, not even a particle, just as no one had carred in FLASH 92.

Along with Black Canry, the other vigilantes of right and might took off and in less than 52 pages solved the problem of juvenile gangsterism, a feat which youth boards all over America have thus far been unable to do.

Who called the emergency meeting of the JSA in ALL STAR #41? None other than the Black Canary, who arrived to find "the room is empty!" Turned into a human popcycle by the Icicle, Black Canary and the fellow crime fighters meet with "The New Injustice Society of the World". Wizard has formed a new group, which, besides Icicle, included Fiddler, Sportsmaster, Huntress and Harlequin. Unfortunately, Wizard made a mistake in choosing Harlewuin, who always did have an eye out for Green Lanturn's attention.

Thawed out at last, Black Canary and Harlequin team up to rescue Justice from Injustice. It was quite a team. Black Canary, once herself having been a bit off the straight and narrow, and Harlequin's confession..."You see, I'm not really a criminal! I only delve in crime to attract the attention of Green Lanturn because...Well, because I'm in love with him!"

Naturally one woman understands another, and tho the story doesn't specifically say Black Canary helped Harlequin in her subsequent get away, she does produce a note from the be-spectacled miss, which somehow got tucked into BC's black boot. Addressed to Green Lanturn, the note says..."It was fun being partners in this adventure! But fair warning——from now on watch out for your loving enemy... the Harlequin!"

But there is even more momentous news to come. JSA forces gather to hear Hawkman declare..."Fellow members, there's someone here who has earned her spurs by what she did in this adventure! So I move we now elect Black Canary to be a perminent member of the Justice Society of America!"

And when Black Canary was called upon for a speech, her reply might have

given one the impression she was out campaigning for political office. Said BC modestly, "Thanks! And I'd like to tell you how proud I am to be at last a member of an organization like ours that will always fight to the death to preserve our American institutions and our American way of life."

Poor Johnny Thunder must have stirred restless in his comic book grave at that one.

Once established on permanent footing, Black Canary didn't miss a single bi-monthly JSA conference, which were to continue on into 1951.

Black Canary, like the others, clashed with "The Man Who Hated Science", learned the "Secret of the Golden Universe", took in the sight of an "Evil Star Over Hollywood", figured out "The Case of the Cosmic Criminals", and participated in "The Adventure of the Invisible Band."

And too, Black Canary, along with the other JSA cohorts, dueled "The Ghost of Billy the Kid" wondered at "The Strange Lives of Edmund Blake", stove off the "Invasion of the Fire People", responded to the "Prophecy of Peril", hit back at the "Invaders from the World Below", held back the "Secret Conquest of Earth", met terror in "Circus of a Thousand Thrills", proved wrong "The Man Who Conquered the Solar System," and waited out "The Day the World Ended."

Then came the day, that for many, was to be the blackest day in history. It came with ALL STAR #57, Feb-Mar 1951, and the JSA battled the Key.

Symbolically, this resolute venture of the JSA was titled "The Mystery of the Vanishing Detectives". Symbolically because when the case was closed, Black Canary the Justice Society and ALL STAR COMICS vanished into the limbo of comic book heaven and the editorial dreams of yesterday.

Almost as if gifted by extra-sensory perception, Black Canary's last spoken words from a comic book page were, "We're on our way Hawkman."

Eleven years passed, eleven bleak and harsh years. National, now more familiarly known as "DC", whispered a rumor that two duplicate earths existed, this explaining the existence of Green Lanturn, the Flash, Hawkman and the Atom.

But these wonderous beings of the 60's were different in costume and alter ego counterparts than their predecessors of the forties and early fifties. The latter still dwelt, apparently, in semi-retirement on a duplicate earth. Double unearthly forces were to throw the old Flash and the new Flash at times into present day action.

Before setting off on a June 1961 tribulation, the old Flash briefly recalled the days when his winged helmet didn't hide graying temples. In #129 of FLASH we caught a glimpse of the old JSA, fighting it out with the Key. Black Canary, as old admirers were quick to perceive, wore boots of scarlet instead of blackish-blue. But this was a small price to pay for even the slightest re-glimpse of a favored figure.

Double earths and corresponding personalities---one wonders. Will Black Canary be among the selected few to return again in regained splender? Be it as it may, Black Canary's out there somewhere. Her booted feet, perhaps even now, beat an eerie tatoo down some almost forgotten alleyway. At times, when ghostly mists blot out all save an almost imperceptible streetlight's glow, one fancies this may be the night when...

A blond haired woman, wearing a costume of indigo and ebony, will speak from the shadows imploring..."Handsome! Will you help me please?"

Andy Zerbe, P.O. Box 6004, Montgomery, Ala. 36106

Welcome back. COMIC WORLD #8 was a worthy successor to previous issues. I think I could have recognized it even if I had received only one page. It has a flavor to it all its own. I think you are still using the same typewriter earlier issues were done on. The type, spelling errors, and layout all help give it its flavor.

The Blackhawks were never a great favorite of mine. Their best days were already behind them when I came upon them. Still, the article cleared up many questions about the team which I had in mind.

Why they used Grumann Skyrockets is still a mystery to me. Have just spent an hour at the library with AMERICAN COMBAT PLANES by Ray Wagner, Hanover House 1960. This is a great book which Iam going to have to spend some time on. Anyway, there were two versions of this plane, the XP-50 for the army and the XF5F-1 for the Navy. Known as the G-34 Skyrocket in the company records, the Blackhawk version was based on the Naval model. Neither one was very successful. It was an experimental plane of which only one model was built. It was first flown in April of 1940, and it was retired later that same year. As to what plane could have been chosen in its place, there was the P-38 Lightning. The first one was flown in January 1939, and production models started coming in late in 1940. This plane was clearly the most superior fighting the US had.

///Your mention of the P-38 is good logic. I had this in my notes for the original article, but somewhere along the line it got misplaced. It seems logical to me that when the first issue of MILITARY came out they picked up any airplane which looked hot, and in 1940 the Grumann may have looked like a winner. Later on when they had writers that knew something about airplanes it was too late to make the change///

Gene Kousek, 720 East Greenwood Ct., Palatine, Ill. 60067

COMIC WORLD #8 received. Some good Blackhawk stuff. The whole concept of CW is many times more digestable than the run of the mill fan projects that have poliferated since your entry into the military.

A couple of minor corrections on your lead in tho, FLATURE FUNNIES became FEATURE COMICS with the 21st issue, not the third. SMASH COMICS #1 bowed in August 1939, and FEATURE COMICS was up to #23 by then.(1st Charlie Chan issue). This was almost two years later. Other than a few numbers I have all the Quality comics published before 1943 so I am not checking you out on this from memory. In my opinion these were the finest of all comics published during the pure Golden Age, nt only for the fine line craftsmanship of Eisner, Fine, Crandall, Gustavson and etc., but for the extremely beautiful color thruout all of them up thru Nov of 1942. Everything went to hell after that with the possible exception of Rayboy's Kid Eternity and the Blackhawk work. The less said about Ward's Blackhawk endeavors would be a kindness to him. Only in his renditions of overblown sex bombs did he excell.

///Your information on the early Quality is greatly appreciated and I stand corrected. I feel you are a little hard on Quality after 1942. They still had some of the best art and the best characters in the business. Only when they began dropping their supporting heroes in favor of simple to draw funny animals and non-humorous humor features did their decline began in earnst, and even then there

were still good characters. In addition to Blackhawk and Plastic Man, there was Uncle Sam, Ken Shannon, T-Man and some of the work on Buccaneers is hard to put down either.///

Paul Washburn, 11313 S.W. Boones Ferry Rd., Portland, Oregon 97219

I'm one of the new ones in comic fandom and up until your ad in RB-CC #66, I had never heard of your fanzine. After reading issue #8, all I can say is, welcome back. Your magazine will, if it is styled on #8, be an instant success in fandom. It fills a big gab in comics fandom, one which starts with RB-CC and ends up somewhere on the level of the many many crudzines floating around today. By not allying yourself with one of the major comic companies, you keep your publication open to an unlimited horizon of oppertunities, and I, for one, congradulate you.

Your concept of what is interesting should be studied closely, and is one that none of the other fanzine editors have been able to successfully imitate, mainly because they let personal prejudices sway their sometimes hazy thinking. The only thing I could possibly criticisize you on is the fact that your Blackhawk article has a tendency to be repitious and somewhat overdrawn. To be sure, you felt that the article should be all inclusive, but for me, it tended to drag at times. But the concept itself was excellent, and I must say you were able to spark my interest, which is quite an accomplishment, in light of the fact that I have had no previous interest in Blackhawk——so you've succeeded in your attempt (as I inturpute it).

Being an admirer of Wally Wood's style of art, I really enjoyed the critical review on him by Overstreet; it's too bad he couldn't have made it an even longer article by reviewing the more recent wood Wally has done. Bob skipped over almost completely Wood's endeavors at Tower and DC.

The article on the patriotic heroes was pretty good, but you included some of your Blackhawk info in it again, which caused it to drag a little. Other than that it tended to dissect American mood and the various patriotic heroes so that one could see how they may go hand in hand or tend to drift apart as events contineously change. I didn't like your editorializing at the end tho, as you seemed to become didactic and rather pious.

I think you've started on the right track, and I can only hope that you'll be able to keep upthe monthly schedule, as I'm sure it will be quite demanding. It sounds to me as tho you know what you're doing, so good luck and keep up the fine work. By the way, I must congradulate you on your promptness. I got #8 just two weeks after I ordered, something unheard of in this day of excruciatingly slow editors where the norm sometimes drops to a 7 to 10 week rely after the order has been sent in. I really appreciate your good service, thanks a lot!

///The reason many editors have such long mailing delays is that many times they haven't even printed the issue when they made out their ads. COMIC WORLD is set up on a two to three issue basis in advance, so we can determine pretty close what will go where, and when the ads break, the issue is already neatly stacked out and ready to go out to new buyers. A lot of ill will would be corrected if other fan editors followed the policy of printing and then advertising, instead of the other way round.

I intended to sound pious and upset when I closed the patriotic hero article, because I am honestly worried about the situation these days. As I said in the article, comic books do anticipate the spirit of the times, and by the look of comic books lately things aren't in awfully great shape around the world. The inclusion of the Blackhawk material again in the article was almost unavoidable. In order to hold together as an article on patriotic heroes some mention had to be made of the best of the bunch.///

Sgt Raymond Elliot, CMR 1, Box 4274, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C. 20332

I received COMIC WORLD #8 and enjoyed your Blackhawk article. I dislike being critical about a well written article, but didn't you forget the two most unusual stories that any comic ever carried. The stories that I refer to are the ones concerning the briefcase which contain knowledge of the future (MILITARY 12 and 29). Other than that, the Blackhawk article was one of the best I have read in a long time.

///I wondered who was going to bring that up. However Ray, it turns out that you were the only reader to catch that careful omission. It seems that when I wrote the original article, I used my collection, and that of Harry Thomas, CW's chief artist, since the two mesh very well, but even between both of us, arch Blackhawk collectors of lo these many years, we didn't have both of those issues. Harry does have MILITARY #12, but neither of us have #29. If there was any way we could have gotten it we would have. I spent the best part of a month buying up every issue of MILITARY/MODERN and BLACKHAWK I could find to patch the few holes up, but copies of #29 just aren't avaliable, anywhere. So, being as we didn't have the second, most important part to that story, you can be certain I wouldn't even get near it with a ten foot pole. However, thanks for bringing it up anyway.///

Bob Saal, 165 Eleventh Ave., Hawthorne, N.J. 07506

COMIC WORLD #8 was received and I found it very, very good. It was so different from the shallower fanzines which are now rife. I entered fandom 4-5 years ago, just at the end of a mass exodus of the early fans who were the First Fandom of comics (to borrow a term from science fiction fandom). A few remain, but those who were intelligent and articulare writers and who had the necessary collections to research deligently are now almost legendary, when remembered at all. I notice your reference to XERO in CW #8, XERO is a now rare fanzine. At least back issue comics can be had at a price, but fanzines like XERO, THE KOMIX and other titles that you are more familiar with than I, and which had the knowledgable articles that characterize THE COMIC WORLD, are virtually unobtainable. They need to be reprinted as is ocassionally done with ALTER EGO.

The difference in COMIC WORLD is that the editor, writers and all are more mature in their outlook and really bring thought and background to bear on their writings. VANGUARD is the only fanzine that is perhaps your equal in well researched, well written articles. Anyway, I look foreward to getting future issues of TCW.

///What you say regarding older fanzines may be true. However as I recall it, and on looking thru my six foot stack of zines in the corner, there were a lot of crudzines back in those days also. There does seem to be a need tho, for a reprint policy on good articles from old fanzines. I may be doing more of this for unobtainable issues of COMIC WORLD if there is enough demand for it. If there were an assured market for it, I would not be adverse to producing a sort of Reader's Digest anthology zine of the best articles from outdated fanzines. But again, there may well be no market for such an item.///

We'll have more letters next time, provided of course, that you write. Don't miss the next issue, headling a Daredevil article, Information Center, and an article on the White Indian. If you don't subscribe yet, we suggest you order early.

-40 and final-

THE SHADOW OF THE BAT
Bumblebeeman (Udo P.)
(1961-08-13 - 2009-06-27)
We Will Never Forget ...
FLATTERMANN